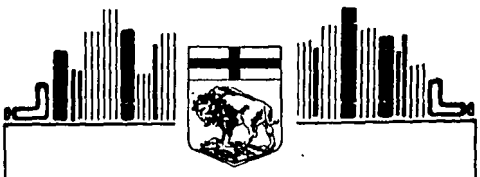
Sixty Years of Progress...

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND



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Sixty Years of Progress...

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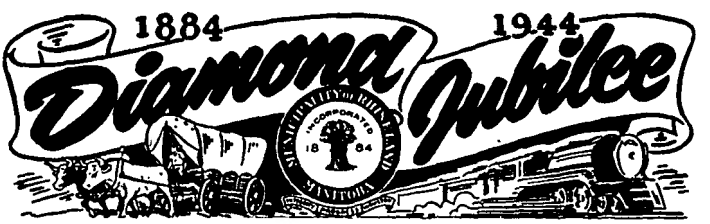

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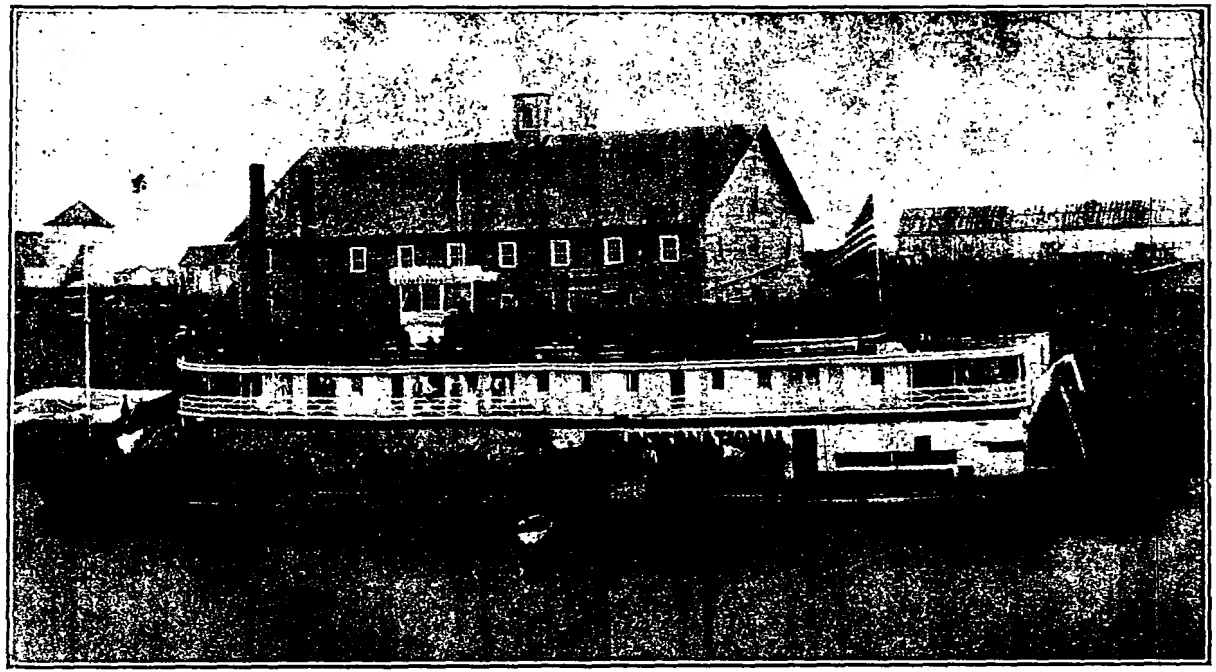


"The International" steamer which brought the first Mennonites to Winnipeg on July 31,1874. It travelled along the Red River north of Fargo.

— FOREWORD —

"ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF LIBERTY"

(Author Unknown)

With the urge to give the ratepaycrs and the younger generation of today a brief history of our Municipality in its sixty-year span of activities as a Municipal Corporation since its formation, and with the hope that some at least appreciate the principles of "Democracy-at-work" as depicted in our ideal municipal system of government, the freedom and liberty that you and I enjoy under democratic government; and last, but not least, that common sense and understanding should or ought to be a guiding factor for further progress in our own community.

Progress, so far as a municipality is concerned, is relative. But in the true sense it ought to inspire us to stand shoulder to shoulder in future years to come, not only to lift our people to a higher economic, social and cultural level, but to make our community a place where people would like to live. That progress has been made is beyond doubt, but as the confidence and intelligent co-operation of ratepayers is as vital to the success of the municipality as any other contributing factor and—as only through the knowledge of the facts can the ratepayer be expected to co-operate fully with the administrative body, this brief history is being submitted, trusting that it will be of informative value and also, to bring closer relationships between the ratepayers and the administrative officers and officials of the Municipality.

Dedicated to the present council of the R.M. of Rhineland, to all ex-reeves and councillors, and fellow citizens in its DIAMOND Jubilee, 1884-1944.

ALTONA, MANITOBA, August, 1944.

H. H. HAMM,
Ex-Sec.-Treas., R.M. of Rhineland.

TRIBUTE TO THE PIONEERS OF THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND

It is with gratitude and admiration that we honor and pay tribute to the memory of pioneers who braved unknown perils to discover a new land of peace and prosperity, where they might again live their lives of industry and devout service which they had enjoyed during the 19th century in Russia until the privileges of the Empress were withdrawn and they felt compelled to seek homes under other skies. Canada was their choice—this land of promise where they were granted freedom of religion.

Though they bore great hardships it can be said of these staunch men and women: "They who never turned their backs but marched breast forward, never doubted that clouds would break, never dreamed, tho' right was worsted, wrong would triumph."

In the face of all obstacles and disappointments they made good. It was their invincible will and optimism that helped them win battles of hardships, and their energy and cheerful courage that kept their faith in life and in their new home.

They have worked bravely during the past years. They gave their best in helping along in the progress of this municipality. And we, their descendants, appreciate what they have done, that we are now able to enjoy the finer things of life. May we also with that same devotion and Christian fellowship preserve the faith of our fathers and help to contribute to a greater appreciation the deeper insights of truth, sturdy convictions and a continuing unreserved commitment of life.

From: EDITORIAL of "ALTONA ECHO," June 28, 1944.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"RHINELAND"

SIXTY YEARS A RURAL MUNICIPALITY

1884 - 1944

The Rural Municipality of Rhineland in the Province of Manitoba has a span of 60 years as a rural municipality to its credit. As far back as 1883 preliminary steps were taken by local citizens to organize a rural municipality, based on democratic principles as laid down by the rules and regulations pertaining to municipal government of the Province of Manitoba. In the year 1884, by Letters Patent, it came into being as the Corporation of the RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF DOUGLAS.

There has probably always been local government of some sort, however crude and rudimentary. But local government as we understand it today had its origin with the Indistrial Revolution in England in the latter part of the 18th century. In Great Britain the industrial revolution had its earliest manifestations. The population of the cities of Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield and other centres doubled and trebled, due to the coming of motive power. In this period the building of roads and bridges, as they were, was the first task of local government and people using the roads and bridges had to pay a toll. The construction of these roads and bridges was done by forced labor.

The passing of the Great Reform Bill in 1832 in England—112 years ago—prepared the way for the passing of "THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT" of 1835, organizing all municipal corporations of England and Wales upon a uniform model and provided for an efficient elective machinery. At that time there were 246 boroughs, shires and other local government units in England, most of them under the so-called feudal system. To this Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 in the United Kingdom can be traced many features that have been embodied, generally speaking, in the laws pertaining to Canadian Municipalities, but with variations to suit Canadian conditions from the Atlantic to the Pacific and laid out on democratic principles.

Mr. J. B. Coyne, K.C., Winnipeg, an eminent authority on constitutional law, not so long ago, gave a lecture on "Canada a Democracy" and had this to say:

Canada, a democracy, meaning today a state ruled by the majority of free and equal citizens, a state where there is personal liberty with freedom of speech, of religion, of assembly, freedom of the press, of trade, and personnel movement and activity; where new ideas are welcome, where private initiative is given wide scope, where law is supreme and justice its goal; where responsible and representative government controls administration of public affairs in the interests of the individual citizen. Democracy is not static; it is always on the march, widening its horizon wth each upward move of human progress and operatng its machinery to meet new conditions. It is not merely a government, it is the embodiment of a philosophy, a conception of life, a creed, which gives breadth and life to a political body; it provides its inspirations and charts the course for its members.

Mr. Coyne then goes on and amplifies on the more important liberties:

1—The right of personal freedom on immunity from wrongful detention or confinement, which is ensured by the actions for assault, wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and malicious presentation and remedies and penalties, of damages and imprisonment, and by writ of habeas corpus. which provides for the production of the prisoner before the court by the person having him in charge, in order that the court may enquire into the cause of his detention.

2—The right of property, protected by various forms of proceedings, particularly those relating to tresspass, replevin, theft, fraud, etc. . . . and remedies or penalties by way of damages, injunctions, etc. . . . and protected also by freedom from taxation except by parliamentary sanction.

3—The right to freedom and contract, so that every one carry on his private business as he likes, provided he does not transgress the law against price discrimination, unfair combinations to unduly enhance prices, fraud and fraudulent representation and other provisions for fair dealing.

4—The right to freedom of conscience.

5—The right to freedom of speech and discussion so that any person may write or say what he pleases so long as he does not infringe the law relating to libel, or slander, or to blasphemous, seditious or obscene writings.

6—The right of assembly and public meeting, which means that persons may meet together and go where they like so long as they do not tresspass upon private rights of property or interfere with its ordinary use and access, disturb the peace, alarm others by display of force, advocate or attempt subversion of the constitution, or government by force, act for any unlawful purpose or otherwise infringe the law relating to public meetings or unlawful assemblies.

7—The right of association, to form groups for educational, political, religious, self-help, business, intellectual, social or other lawful purposes, subject to much the same conditions as the right of assembly, the right of association arising from the general freedom of action, from the wide scope in the making of contracts, from long established, religious and social practices, from extension in provisions by which joint stock companies and other organizations can be incorporated and trade unions formed, and from the limitation upon the law of conspiracy in English law.

8—The right of judicature, whereby everyone is entitled to have any case affecting him, in whatever tribunal, whether court or not, tried in accordance with the principles of natural justice, particularly that a man may not be a judge in his own cause and that no party should be condemned unheard or have a decision given against him unless he has been given reasonable opportunity of putting forward his case.

From the foregoing you will note that the individual citizen may say what he pleases, provided he does not infringe the legal rights of others or otherwise transgress the law. Public authorities, on the other

hand, may do nothing but what they are authorized to do by some rule of common law or statute. However, the citizen has duties as correlative to his liberties and rights.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF LIBERTY

His duties include not only observance of the rights of others and obedience to the law, but participation in the life of the community, intelligent acquaintance with public matters, exercise of his franchise and taking part in public affairs; not with the idea of serving personal, class or sectional interests, but in the capacity of a citizen with the view to the general good of its country and of its citizens. Unless a large part of a community is prepared to do so, loss of liberty, insecurity of property and poor public administration is the result.

Mr. W. L. McTavish, editor-in-chief of the Winnipeg Tribune, in an interesting discourse on the development of local government from an historical background, among other things, had this to say:

The very word "municipal" comes from the Latin "Municipium," meaning a township or political district. The Romans, in their time, divided Britain south of Hadrians' wall into 33 municipia. Interesting too, is the origin of the word municipium. In turn, it comes from two Latin words, one: Munus, a duty or responisbility, and cipio, I take. In other words, a municipal official takes a duty, a responsibility upon himself.

Mr. John W. Dafoe et al, erstwhile editor-in-chief of the Winnipeg Free Press, and chancellor of the University of Manitoba, in an equally interesting and instructive address only a few years ago, analysed "Democracy as against Bureaucracy" and herein sounded a timely warning, saying:

> The problem of government by democratic processes grow ever more complex and in the efforts to solve them in the supposed interest of efficiency, there is evident a tendency to replace democratic methods, which are circuitous and slow, by expedients which are in their very nature arbitrary, even though they may appear to have democratic sanctions.
>
> This question of how a democratic country is to be governed efficiently and in keeping with the principles of popular government is calling urgently for a solution suitable for the times; and in seeking this solution we must be careful not to take what seem to be short-cuts, but are in fact roads leading into strange territory. There is a particular danger, at least theoratically, in countries which govern themselves on the British pattern; because in these countries—and Canada is one of them—the stability of state and of the system of government, municipal, provincial or federal, is at any time the stability of the electorate, for in all three of them there is in the long run no protection against the power of he state, except the electorate itself. The current conception of government is that of the Universal Chore-boy, the Great Provider and the Great White Chief. A Greek philosopher said long ago that a state was strong if it had the support of its people, but weak and heading for destruction if it had to support its people.

And Mr. Dafoe continues:

This bit of political knowledge is now on the discard. Instead, a vast experiment is going on by which the government is expected to assist, shepherd, control and direct all the gainful activities on mankind, to the end that everybody will have maximum ends. It is a producer, not a consumer philosophy, and designed to short-circuit power and responsibility and we have bureaucracy.

The reader by now might well have asked himself: Why the citation? What-in-the-sam-hill, has this to do with the history of the Rural Municipality of Rhineland, or, for that matter, with any other municipality? Only this: that in the humble opinion of the writer these quotations bring before us a proper focus of the background of elective and responsible government as we understand it, today, be it federal, provincial or municipal under our Democracy.

DEMOCRACY: Ye gods, what sins have been and are still being committed in thy name; nay, wholesale rape is being perpetrated in the name of democracy, and YOU, Mr. Citizen, beware of being a partner to this crime, for: Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Lacking this eternal vigilance, individually and collectively, the result will be DICTATORSHIP in the fullest sense of the word, as against government for the people and by the people.

THE HOME FRONT

Let us now come a little closer to home. Canada, as you all know, forms an integral part of the United Kingdom and this is one of the Dominions "beyond the seas" where democratic principles guide federal, provincial and municipal institutions in their respective spheres.

Not until the passing of the Constitutional Act in 1791, separating Upper (Ontario) and Lower (Quebec) Canada as a provincial entity, can we say that local government had grown to any extent, as no popular control, that is, elective machinery, existed. This was the period of Family Compact Rule and popular ferment, leading up to the William Lyon MacKenzie rebellion in 1837 here in Canada. The "ACT OF UNION" in 1840, based on the Durham Report submitted to the Imperial Government, provided for the first time real, local government in Canada. In the passing of this Act was seen the influence of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, passed in Great Britain.

In 1867 all provinces of the Dominion of Canada merged into one Confederation under one federal government under "The British North America Act." In 1873 the first Municipal Act of the Province of Manitoba was passed. It consisted of 15 pages and 49 sections. Today the "Municipal Act" has 436 pages and 1,205 sections, which form the basis on which a Municipal Council can function and administer local affairs within the limitations of that Act.

There are today, in Manitoba, 174 incorporated municipalities, of which 112 are rural—like Rhineland—31 towns, 23 villages, four cities and five suburban, that is, adjoining a city close by.

All municipalities are a creature of the Province, that is to say: the municipalities are formed under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislature. Let us touch briefly on the powers of a municipality. As said before, it exists by virtue of the Province. The Legislature which creates it, may give to it or withhold from it exactly such powers as it

sees fit; and powers once given, may be extended, restricted or withdrawn and under certain circumstances the Municipality which the Province created may, under the authority of the Province, be disorganized, wound up and brought to an end. Thus we see that the Municipality is dependent upon and subordinate to the Province Every Municipal Council, restricted in its jurisdiction or powers as a body corporate, can exercise these delegated powers only to the extent as laid down within the covers of the Municipal Act.

The said Municipal Act, for our purposes here, divides itself into two parts, consisting of one word only in each part, and using basic English - they are SHALL and MAY. A council "shall" do this or that, or, a council "may" do this or that. Here again permit me to give another quotation relative thereto.

Mr. Wilson E. McLean, K.C., Winnipeg, in his lecture on Interpretation of Statutes, delivered during the University Extension Course, in June, 1938, says thus: . . . The expression "shall" shall be construed as imperative and the expression "may" as permissive. Where the statute uses the word "shall" it is imperative and the duty must be performed. For example: Section 43 (1) says: "The Council of every municipality **shall** annually sit as a Court of Revision. . . ." There is nothing permissive about this. That is a statutory duty that a council must perform.

Again, the word "may" imports a discretion, as to whether or not the thing will be done. For example: Section 120 of "The Municipal Act" provides: "Taxes **may** be recovered with costs in a court having jurisdiction as a debt due to the Municipality. . . ." It is not imperative that the taxes be recovered by suit.

From here on we will be on home base, in our own municipality, gleaning facts and figures from the records on file in the vaults at the Municipal Office, Altona Manitoba. It will interest many a pioneer ratepayer, as well as the younger generation of ours, as to WHO is WHO in public affairs pertaining to this municipality. Witness: the appreciable attendance in numbers of old and young, taking part in the Diamond Jubilee Celebration, the sixtieth anniversary of its existence as a municipality, on Saturday, July 1st, 1944.

The present area of Rhineland Municipality consists of ten townships lying in the southern part of the Red River Valley, four of which are bounded on the south by the international boundary. Rhineland has therefore a total of 360 square miles of 230,400 acres. The degree of settlement is indicated by the fact that 228,640 acres are taxable. It therefore comprises an area which is subject to intensive cultivation and is well suited for agricultural development. The municipality surrounds two incorporated villages, namely, Gretna and Plum Coulee, incorporated in the years 1896 and 1905 respectively. The village of Altona, while not incorporated, goes as "The Unincorporated Village District of Altona" since 1919, boasting a population of about 800, surpassing the above mentioned incorporated villages by approximately 300 citizens, young and old. Rosenfeld and Horndean form an essential part of the community. A rural community, as in the case of any other community, reflects the people who make up that community. In addition people reflect the natural condition under which they make a living, and for these two reasons a brief study of the population is of interest.

The bulk of the population in Rhineland is of Dutch, Swiss and partly German origin. By far the largest majority is Mennonite, of Dutch origin, whose forefathers, centuries ago, emigrated from Holland into Germany, and from there again in 1789 into southern Russia, always proving themselves as pioneers in agriculture; in other words: they were and still are, in the main "children of the soil."

From southern Russia then, 1874-1875, a substantial number of these people came to Canada, "to the land of the free," upon the invitation of the Dominion Government, who, at that time was eager to bring agricultural people into the prairie provinces, irrespective of creed or religion. These Dutch people from Russia adhere to the Mennonite faith and form the bulk of the population within the boundaries of the Rural Municipality of Rhineland, and beyond.

They are a friendly, hard-working, intelligent lot of farming people, simple in their tastes, asking little in the way of comforts, God-fearing and freedom loving. In the development of their farming business these people have an impressive record. Suffice is to say: these people made a paradise of the southern part of Manitoba, situated on the west side of the Red River and up to the Pembina Mountains, and as mentioned before, comprising the bulk of population in the Municipality of Rhineland.

These early settlers had to overcome many hardships, as in any pioneer settlement. No railroads, no roads, only buffalo grass, swamps and mosquitoes. Primitive agricultural implements only were at their disposal; drought, floods and all other forces of nature had to be overcome. Churches and schools were built to foster wholesome community life. In this span of years no one can deny the progress made in the economic, educational and social sphere in this locality. The sanctity of home, the school and the Christian church are still considered three factors here that form the backbone of a nation.

As early as 1875 the area south of the town of Morden and the present site of where the village of Winkler now stands, was settled by the "Alt-Kolonier" (Old Colonists) and shortly thereafter homesteads were taken up to the east of the said area by Mennonites who originally settled (in 1874-75) on the East Reserve, that is, east of the Red River, covering roughly the present boundaries of the Municipality of Hanover with Steinbach as the centre.

Courage and grim determination by these early settlers, combined with faith and perseverance of a better future to come, has made this community what it is today, namely, one of the most progressive and most densely populated rural municipalities in the Province of Manitoba. The present population is slightly less than 8,000, with 54 school districts, including 18 union districts. No other rural municipality in the province has as many schools as Rhineland. Mr. Ratepayer, have you considered the pros and cons of larger school units in Manitoba?

SOME STATISTICS

Because of small-acreage farms for some time back, a variety of specialty crops are grown, such as sugar beets, corn, sunflowers, flax, rape, etc. . . ., in addition to wheat, oats and barley. In 1884 the municipality, then known as "Douglas," comprised an area of 103,940 acres, of which 21,8466 acres were cultivated. Population was 1,895. Taxes

ranged from $3.11 to $9.15 on a 160-acre farm. Total Municipal Levy: $2,186.50.

Livestock:	1884	1944
Oxen	351	Nil
Cattle	1,766	7,900
Sheep	437	1,703
Hogs	1,061	8,600
Horses	823	6,220

Farm Machinery: (Nil in 1884)	1944
Threshing machines	243
Tractors	512
Motor trucks	178
Automobiles	940
Binders	1,085
Gas engines	464
Combines (approx.)	200

In 1912 the municipality had 27 school districts, including nine unions.

The total municipal levy on a five million dollar assessment amounted to $55,000; out of this $19,814.13 was school levy.

1919: Municipal levy, $102,188.24; out of this $44,190.25 to schools. 1930: Municipal levy, $168,929.50, and to schools $84,595.94. 1944: Municipal levy, $190,650, and to schools $91,882.

The Municipal Council of 1884	The Municipal Council of 1944
Reeve: Otto Schultz	Reeve: John D. Giesbrecht
Councillors: John Schwartz	Councillors: J. J. Friesen
John Buhler	H. P. Hildebrandt
Peter Funk	J. C. Braun
Gerhard Klassen	Geo. A. Friesen
Peter Friesen	Ed. Pokrant
John Braun	Jac. J. Rempel

In the 60 years since Rhineland was incorporated as a municipality 18 persons served in the capacity as reeve, with Otto Schultz as the first reeve. He served for one year. The 1944 incumbant of that office is John D. Giesbrecht, farmer, Plum Coulee, who is tops for the long term which he has to his credit in faithful service as reeve. He first entered public life as councillor for a period of eight years and was elected reeve in the 1929 fall elections, which position he still holds. Several members of the 1944 council can well be placed in the same category with Mr. Giesbrecht for length of office held. They put "service" first and are taking warranted and unwarranted (mostly unwarranted) criticism from the electorate in their stride.

REEVES: 1884-1944

(Those marked *—on and off again)

1884- —Otto Schultz
1885-86—Enoch Winkler
1887- —Peter Funk
1888- —David Peters
1889- —Peter Bergen
1890-91—Gerhard Klassen
*1892-95—Jacob Heppner
*1896- —Anton Heppner
1897- —Jac. Heppner
1898- —Peter R. Friesen
1899- —Johann Siemens
*1900- —Cor. Bergman
1901- —Anton Heppner
1902-03—Cor. Bergman
1904-07—Wm. Berg
*1908-12—H. J. Friesen
1913- —Jac. P. Doerksen
1914-16—H. J. Friesen
1917-18—Jac. A. Klassen
1919- —H. D. Penner
1920-29—Peter A. Toews
1930-44—John D. Giesbrecht (still serving)

Secretary-Treasurers Holding Office: 1884-1944

1884-89 Franz Kliewer	1899- ---Theodore Kintzi
*1890-91—Wm. Rempel	1900-06—Fr. F. Siemens
1892-94—Dav. Schellenberg	1907-12—Peter Praun
1895-96--Wm. Rempel	1913-43--H. H. Hamm
1897-98 Geo. Limprecht	1944- - Otto Hamm

The records also show that on the night of November 14-15, 1898, the municipal safe, at that time kept at the office of H. Loeppky's General Store, Altona, was cracked and allegedly $1,105 stolen. A check-up was made by the Municipal Commissioner's Department and found that actually $4,112.62 was short, a misappropriation by the clerk, Geo. Limprecht. On the verge of being apprehended and taken into custody he gave himself the bullet in a back room at the then P. Striemer's Liquor Store, Altona. Cause of dishonesty: gambling and habitual indulgence in vitamin "W". His bondsmen promptly compensated the shortage to the municipality. Audit costs, $478.

The "Minute Book" reveals that first council meeting of the Rural Municipality of Douglas was held on Tuesday, Jan. 8th, 1884; in the house of Erdman Penner, Esq., Gretna, and after signing the declaration of office papers they, the council, took their seats, with Reeve Otto Schultz presiding.

By-law No. 1, appointing Mr. Franz Kliewer of Neuanlage village, Gretna P.O., as Secretary-Treasurer for this municipality for the year 1884 is adopted and confirmed. The standing committees, such as finance, assessment, roads and bridges, schools and printing, were named. A resolution was passed that Reeve Schultz and Councillor John Schwartz be a committee to secure the future necessary accommodation for holding the meetings of this council. At the call of the reeve the Douglas Council met on Feb. 2, 1884, at 10 a.m., at the house of John Klassen, Esq., in the village of Neuanlage, located a mile east of Gretna. At this meeting it was moved by Councillor Peter Friesen and seconded by Councillor Gerhard Klassen:

> "That the rules as laid down in Section 484 of the Municipal Act of 1883, for the guidance of Municipal Councils, be and is hereby adopted as governing the workings of this Council." Carried.

Another resolution of interest to us of the present day is quoted:

> Schwartz-Klassen That this council, having been petitioned by the Mennonite population of 1-1 East, to assist them to have said township detached from the Rural Municipality of Montcalm and made over to this Municipality of Douglas, now appoint a special committee to consist of the reeve and the mover and seconder of this resolution, to confer with the reeve and council of Montcalm; that a copy of this resolution also be sent to G. H. Tennant, M.P.P. for this district, for his assistance and advice in the matter. Carried.

Pursuant to this resolution taxes levied in 1-1E were promptly paid into the coffers of Douglas Municipality, in spite of the fact that this shuffle of boundaries was a contentious matter for several years. Not until July 8, 1891, was 1-1E finally and legally considered as having been added to Douglas Municipality. In final settlement Douglas Council paid over to Montcalm Municipality in compensation the sum of $39,000 odd.

In May, 1884, the Douglas Council realized that the office was in need of a Journal for bookkeeping purposes. A local man by the name of Jacob Peters offered to sell his, in which only two pages had been used, for the sum of $1.50; and believe it or not, the Journal was purchased with the proviso that payment therefor be made in the fall of the year when tax payments were due.

At a special meeting of Council on January 11, 1887, a petition was presented by residents praying that the council do not accede to the proposal of building a road from Walhalla, N.D., and diagonally across Douglas to Morris, Manitoba, as it would devalue the farms through which the road would pass. The road was not built. The proposed course of the road as it would effect Douglas can still be traced on a Dominion Survey Map, designated thereon as a trail.

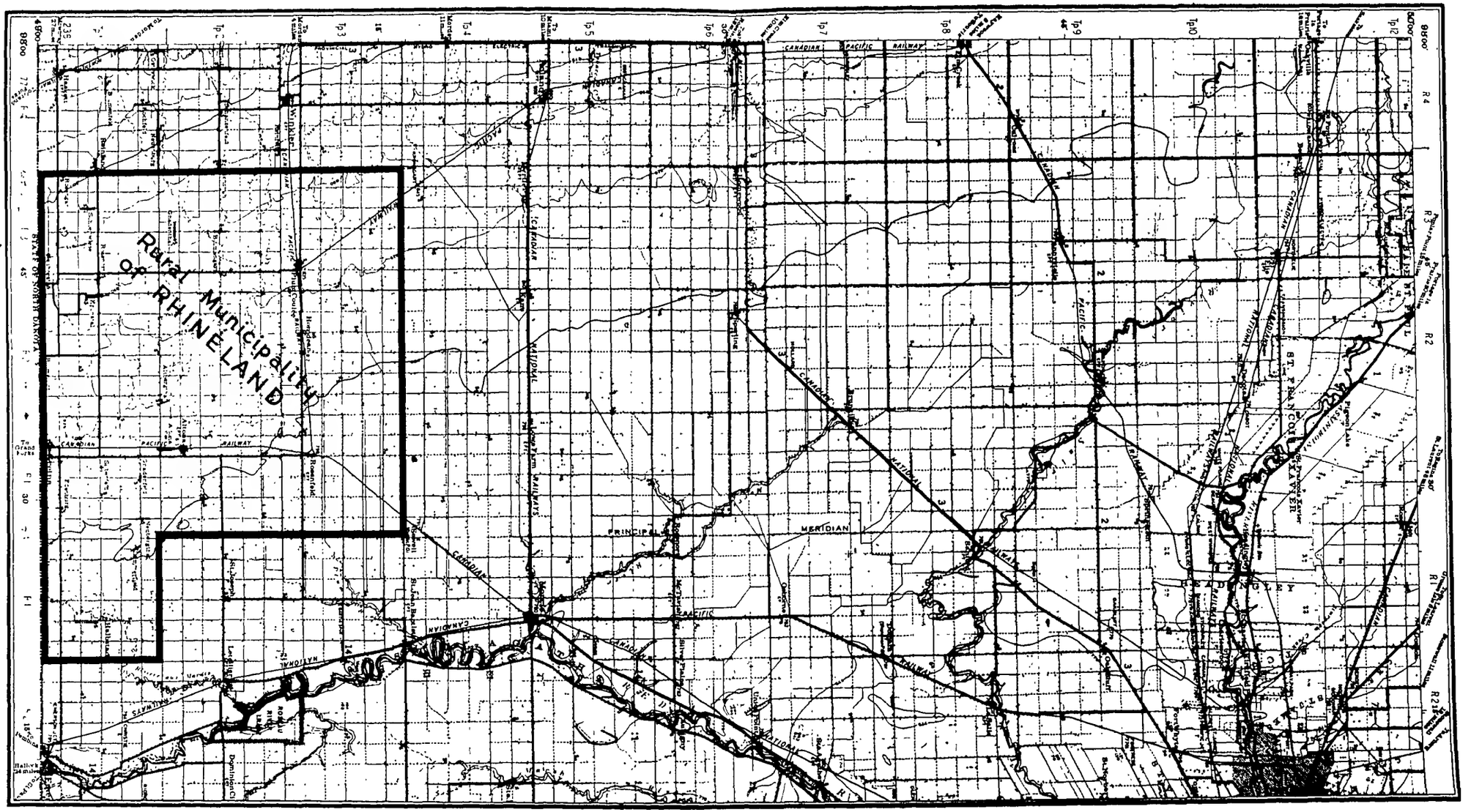
In the summer of 1887 a smallpox epidemic broke out in Gretna. The popular belief was that this dread disease had been brought in by some twenty Orientals who had landed at Gretna from Winnipeg, intending to cross the borderline into the U.S.A. Three detention quarters were built at the expense of the municipality, two serving as isolation quarters and one for the staff of nurses. Three Chinese and two whites were isolated. One white man died and was buried near the shacks which were located on the eastern portion of the outskirts of Gretna. Rev. J. L. Small, minister of the Presbyterian Church, Gretna, recovered; so did the three Chinese. The other 17 Orientals had been housed in the centre of the village and kept there over the winter. All this time American soldiers guarded their side of the border; on the Canadian side a detachment of Canadian Northwest Mounted Police did likewise. People were warned to keep away from Gretna, and whoever got in could not get out and had to be confined for the duration until the danger of contagion had passed. In due course all Orientals were moved back to Winnipeg under guard and nothing further heard of them. The house in town where the other Orientals had been quartered was set on fire as a precautionary measure.

Seed grain relief cropped up for the first time in 1889 in 1-1 East and was given to applicants on a written promise to repay in full, together with the current year's taxes. The relief recipients were Hugh Smith, to the value of $48.80; Fred Morgan, $75.00; John Hayward, $20.00; Mrs. Nancy McColl, $25.00; and W. L. Griffiths, $75.00 (all of Emerson P.O.).

Another advance to the same parties in the spring of 1890, with only slight variations as to the amount, but on the same conditions for repayment.

The records show that Douglas Council, amongst others, was asked to assist Morton Municipality, Manitoba, in procuring sufficient seed and feed through the Speaker of the House of the Provincial Legislature. On Feb. 4, 1891, the following resolution was passed:

> Abr. Doerksen-Jacob Toews—Whereas many farmers in townships 1, 2, 3 and 4 in ranges 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 west, and various other parts of our province have been subject to afflictions of different kinds, viz: early frost in 1888, drought in 1889, hail in 1890, so that the crops in the respective years were partial failures;
>
> And whereas many farmers for the causes above stated are unable



Southern Manitoba, showing territory in which the Rural Municipality of Rhineland is situated. The dots represent farm buildings. Most of the villages are shown, proving that this is the most densely populated rural district in Manitoba.

to procure seed and feed and will be compelled to leave the country in order to make their living elsewhere;

And whereas the leaving of the country of a large number of our farming population would not only cause a large area of land to go unseeded in the spring of the present year, but would also prevent intending immigrants to settle in Manitoba;

Therefore, be it hereby resolved: that we petition the Legislature of Manitoba to grant a sum of $50,000 to the said farmers, thus supplying mans to procure what they need most, namely: seed grain and feed for their horses, thereby giving the farmer a chance to try and stay in our Province of Manitoba;

And be it further resolved: that we pray the Legislature of Manitoba to form provincial hail insurance districts. "CARRIED"

This was from a municipality far west from Douglas and on the Pembina Hills. It is pointed out here that relief in seed and feed was confined to 1-1 East only as far as Douglas Municipality was concerned. We may take it for granted, however, that other townships in the municipality faced the same conditions, but pulled through, some mean way or other, in these economic setbacks.

Does history repeat itself? Many a present-day farmer will recall the depression years in the thirties, when grain of all kinds and five-dollar bills were as scarce as hen's teeth, particularly the years 1931-36 inclusive. Always hoping against hope that the next year things would turn for the better. Each year got worse and tribulations piled up, going right down to rockbottom.

The grasshoppers played havoc with grain and garden stuff from 1931-33 inclusive, leaving a substantial damage in their wake; the measly price of grain in those years all helped the pace downwards, man-made, of course, due to economic nationalism, and world-wide. From this distortion of the world's economy, the damming up of trade, the erection of tariffs and quotas, most of the ills of the nineteen-thirties flowed, with an ultimate world depression which even the richest nations could not escape. Drought and rust on top of all this put the farming population particularly in desperate economic straits. Seed grain and fodder relief had to be handled in wholesale fashion, and unemployment (direct) relief mounted to alarming proportions. History does repeat itself. If you require further corroboration of this consult the good book and read up the whole history of the patriarch's son Joseph, his life and activities in Egypt, and you will have a clear picture of the trials and tribulations that humanity, sometimes, has to cope with, individually and collectively.

To the writer, incidentally, these depression years proved to be a most interesting period in the study of human nature, male and female of the specie; he learned more of psychology-at-work in these years than could have been obtained through book study.

Unemployment relief as such, from public funds, was unknown in our community, as the various church congregations took care of their own needy members. The demand for assistance in charity exceeded the supply of the churches with the result municipal councils, urban and rural, had to tackle the unemployment relief problem under Dominion-Provincial jurisdiction. Some people would come into the office requesting

relief, decidedly reluctant to do so; others would be demanding and vociferous, as of right. No two would come in the same frame of mind. The outbreak of World War II, September, 1939, terminated relief in our municipality.

With January 1, 1891, with the sanction of the Municipal Commissioner, the name "Douglas" was changed to "Rhineland" and from hereon has been known as THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND, covering an area of twelve townships. With January 1, 1917, the western two townships 1-4 and 2-4W, were detached from Rhineland and added to the Rural Municipality of Stanley, leaving Rhineland with ten townships, as it is today, and Stanley enlarged to nine townships.

From the early 90's there has been noticeable a decided swing upwards in the economic, social and cultural life of the community. Progressively more land was brought under cultivation with better and more modern farm machinery becoming available. The seeder, the reaper, the flail, the oaken roller and the upright standing little steam engine gave way to the sulky plow, the drill, the binder and the self-propelling steam engine. Livestock holdings improved, perhaps not so much in quality as in quantity. This in turn was followed by the municipality building better roads with better road machinery, as had not been possible so far. This material progress naturally reflected in higher tax levies as may be gathered from the tax statistics recorded herein:

Statistics—Showing Tax Levies, 1884-1944, in Ten-Year Periods, Based on a 160-Acre Farm

	1884	1894	1904	1914	1924	1934	1944
NW 4-1-1E	$3.11	$21.62	$28.57	$29.54	$ 89.07	$63.74	$144.10
NW 17-1-1E	3.69	17.10	31.29	31.68	105.60	72.80	114.91
NW 4-1-1W	3.88	17.56	41.29	45.18	100.80	74.40	135.41
NW 17-1-1W	8.65	11.27	30.97	33.60	102.69	70.17	114.61
NW 4-1-2W	7.69	6.51	24.36	31.47	91.00	73.78	145.28
NW 17-1-2W	9.15	17.29	19.53	20.16	86.40	79.42	103.11
NW 4-1-3W	3.92	10.16	27.06	20.16	91.20	54.46	87.36
NW 17-1-3W	4.05	8.55	21.69	20.16	76.00	67.34	106.32
NW 4-2-3W	4.70	7.23	21.69	19.20	56.00	71.46	118.95
NW 17-2-3W	5.05	6.51	24.36	21.20	81.60	81.60	97.20
NW 4-3-3W	3.51	19.05	30.45	32.34	110.88	76.23	116.89
NW 17-3-3W	4.20	6.51	21.93	19.20	85.28	79.20	118.95
NW 4-2-2W	3.78	7.23	32.93	48.65	56.00	51.70	133.28
NW 17-2-2W	3.20	7.23	46.18	33.12	125.29	96.28	129.02
NW 4-3-2W	4.13	11.31	34.48	48.47	102.61	53.58	137.06
NW 17-3-2W	4.80	21.64	28.58	39.20	79.81	85.15	100.65
NW 4-2-1W	4.80	26.76	50.36	58.29	120.40	81.65	142.08
NW 17-2-1W	4.97	15.45	26.88	50.36	96.20	69.44	134.30
NW 4-3-1W	4.64	12.61	24.75	58.32	103.41	94.60	133.60
NW 17-3-1W	4.21	15.54	18.02	39.32	147.81	95.85	112.18

Note re above statistics: In order that the present day owner of the above quarter sections may follow through the whole sixty-year span in the growth of tax levies, showing the variations, he will no doubt find out for himself the reason why; better roads were demanded and more roads added thereto and kept in repair; the jump from six school districts in

1884 to 54 in 1920, tells another story; the demand by the ratepayers for more and more social services is still another factor. All these demands doubled and trebled and taxes grew accordingly in this space of time. The casual reader will only note the high taxes in this list of statistics, but the thoughtful reader will read more between the lines and depict the human touch and recognize the trend of "whither are we going." The irresponsible citizen may keep on demanding more services from public servants and they in turn may properly ask bluntly: are you prepared to pay for such services? If so, well and good; but at the same time he must see to it that the law of diminishing returns does not set in. We certainly should have learned our lesson from World War I and the repercussions after that war. World War II is still going strong, but when peace comes, whenever that may be, it will test the ingenuity of mankind to face things squarely.

This economic progress continued with the turn of the century. A long range drainage policy was inaugurated under the supervision and direction of the provincial government. Large areas in the northern parts of the municipality were gradually drained and brought under cultivation by people with moderate means, buying lands at a very low price from the Hudson's Bay Co., the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., and Trust Companies. Millions of gallons of water annually spilled over these waste lands, flat as a pancake, coming down from the Pembina Mountains as "foreign" water, emptying into the Red River. When it was Springtime in the Rockies it was Springtime on the Seas here in those times. Tribute is here paid to those early pioneers of this area who stuck it out when others gave up and moved out of these swamps, notably: Henry, August and Ferdinand Pokrant, brothers; Friedrich Pokrant, a cousin, and father to our present councillor, Ed. Pokrant. Others were: August and Karl Recksiedler, Gottfried Schroeder, Karl Knopf and Fred Janke.

Rosenfeld Flood of 1903

Spread over a period of some thirty-five odd years this long range drainage policy in Drainage District No. 12 resulted in gradual control of this foreign water and bringing more lands under cultivation. Against the benefits there were drainage levies, ranging from $7.58 at the beginning of this century and as high as $41.11 in 1935 on a quarter section. In the earlier stages all drainage ditch construction was done by contract and was a costly affair. In September, 1928, the ratepayers of Rhineland voted for the purchase of a dragline machine at a cost of $15,700, and on September 25 our dragline bucket dipped into genuine Manitoba gumbo in our municiality, with construction costs well below half-price to contract price. This investment has repaid itself over and over for the benefit of all the ratepayers in the community. Older ditches or channels have been widened and deepened and new ones constructed in the latter years with this machine. In addition many hundreds of dugouts have been constructed for individual farmers to alleviate water shortage for the farm livestock in the municipality, with the Dominion Government contributing from four and a half to six cents per cubic yard of dirt removed, depending on the size of the dugout. This assistance began under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, 1935, and is still in force, and our Northwest Dragline No. 105 is still going strong, with day and night service, since the fall of 1928, in the summer months until freeze-up each year. Our Municipal Council, with an eagle eye on the dollar, believes in "service at cost" Mr. Ratepayer, and for your benefit.

By an act of the Legislature, cited as "The Land Drainage Arrangement Act, 1935," the whole matter of drainage debts in the 24 drainage districts of the province were readjusted on an equitable basis.

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF 1924

Left to right, standing: Jacob J. Friesen, Ward 1; Jacob J. Dyck, Ward 2; Ed. Pokrant, Ward 5; H. H. Hamm, secretary-treasurer. Front row: John D. Giesbrecht, Ward 3; Peter A. Toews, reeve; Jacob J. Wiebe, Ward 4; Jacob J. Rempel, Ward 6.

D.D. No. 12 was organized in the year 1902 and embraced part of the municipalities of Montcalm, Morris and Rhineland, totalling 132,936 acres, with 13,920 for Montcalm, 38,880 for Morris and 80,136 acres for Rhineland. Net indebtedness to the province by Rhineland in 1935 amounted to $157,569 in this "foreign" water problem. The debt to be assumed by Rhineland after readjustment was scaled down to $86,000 on a 15-year debenture basis and spread over the whole municipality. In February, 1944, the council considered it expedient to pay up "in full" to the tune of $43,089 for the remaining debentures, thereby saving interest payments to the extent of $8,870. The council deserves a white feather in their hat for the Rural Municipality of Rhineland is now debenture-free. Drainage maintenance and repairs, of course, will have to be kept up as heretofore, but the costs will be small in this respect. Prosperous farm homes are within this area of once low, wet lands, but there is still room for further improvements.

GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENTS

We always have had among our own farming population individual people, who for their own sake, attempted to better their grain varieties or improve their livestock holdings. But it took occasional hard knocks from the elements of nature, war and its repercussions, that practically forced others to fall in line and do likewise.

It was under circumstances like these that the Rhineland Agricultural Society was born at the beginning of the late depression period. In the extremely eventful history of our municipality the Rhineland Agricultural Society is one of the many other organizations that has contributed in no small measure to the numerous activities of advancement, of which this municipality can well be proud of. The program of this society is by no means a seasonal one. On the average there is a group of progressive men and women directing and guiding the activities of the society. A few highlights will suffice to bring into the limelight the more outstanding factors contributing to the pace of steady progress, as cited by Menno Klassen, a graduate of the Manitoba Agricultural College, who since graduation, has devoted his whole time and service for the benefit of the community.

"During the winter months of the first few years agricultural short courses were sponsored in co-operation with the extension service of the Department of Agriculture. These courses dealt with the various agricultural subjects, agricultural problems and their solutions. Those who attended these courses, and especially the final social evenings which climaxed these courses, will remember the spirit in which they were conducted. . . . The fact alone that they were conscious of battling the problems of depression unitedly and intelligently through their society, seemed to create much satisfaction amongst the people.

"In 1935, due to the increased demand by young farmers and homemakers for more advanced agricultural and homemaking training, the society was fortunate in being able to open the first rural youth training centre in this province at Altona, with an enrollment of 60 pupils (60, the symbolic figure of the R.M. of Rhineland in its Diamond Jubilee year, 1884-1944).

"For five consecutive years it has operated with a total enrollment of over 250 pupils, of which some have continued their studies at the University of Manitoba, while others assumed local leadership in their respective localities.

"During the spring and winter months one of the most important activities encouraged and promoted in co-operation with the extension service are those of boys' and girls' clubs. Thousands of young people have been members of these clubs and the training they receive in club work has been invaluable to them in later life.

"A few years ago, with the introduction of a more intensive agricultural program a full-time agriculturist was engaged to assist farmers in the control of livestock and crop diseases; to further promote a type of agriculture that is suited to the conditions of this area; to assist farmers in obtaining seeds of new crops and better varieties; to carry on the work of planning agricultural short courses, agricultural schools and meetings throughout this territory.

"In spite of the success in the first 14 years the membership still feels that it has but 'scratched the surface' when one stops to think what still can and needs to be done in the way of improving agricultural methods and practices in order to keep on raising the standard of living of a municipality that is celebrating its 60th anniversary."

As a standard rule the annual fair is held without the blare and fanfare of the "midway" kind, usually connected with fairs. However, sports, music and instructive educational lectures fill the bill. And what is most appreciative, is the attendance by young and old, the display of interest in the progress of their own community. We still carry with us a pleasant memory of such an occasion when the Hon. R. F. McWilliams, lieutenant-governor, and Mrs. McWilliams, visited this district a few years ago.

COMMUNITY PROGRESS COMPETITION

The Community Progress Competition conducted by the Canadian National Railways was another contributing factor in the march of progress. This competition was inaugurated in the community in 1930. It was designed to stimulate the economic and cultural development. A board of eminent judges visited the communities and graded them by an elaborate system of scoring, on their agricultural practices and progress, on their handicrafts and art, on their community activities in education and recreation.

Five schools in Rhineland entered into this competition. The Edenthal-Halbstadt district near Gretna was successful in winning the first prize in 1931. These successes were not obtained without strenuous community effort. The above named district entered the competition with little knowledge or interest. The criticism of the farmers, however, stirred the community to action. A capable president and secretary were elected. Mr. J. D. Siemens, one of the teachers in this district at that time, was an active leader in this. "Jack" Crawford, a graduate of the Manitoba Agricultural College, and agricultural representtive for Stanley-Rhineland, acted likewise, and the district began to work in earnest. During the next year—1932—certified seed was introduced for the first time; sweet clover,

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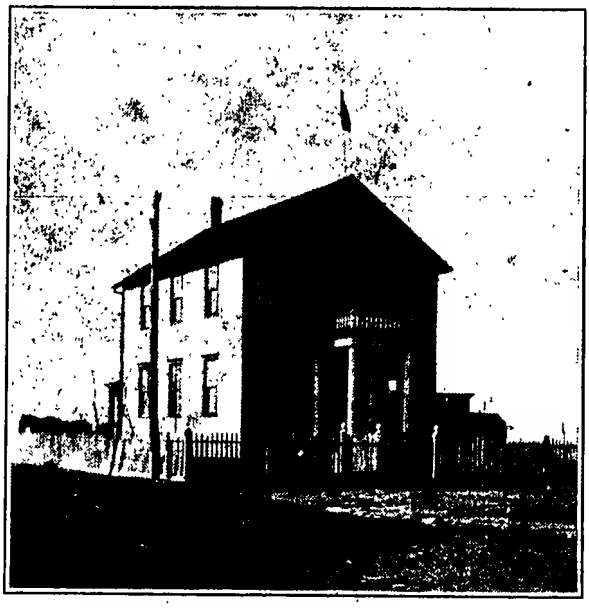
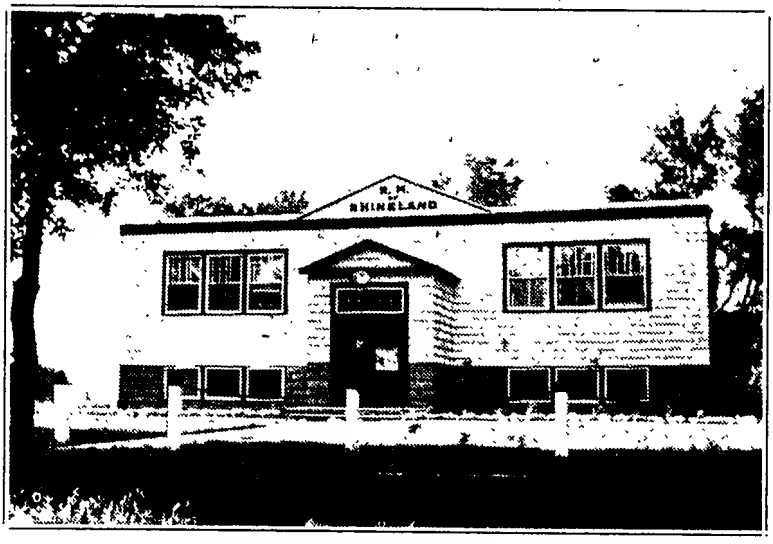


YESTERDAY



TODAY

alfalfa, and a rotation of crops were begun; experiments in the cultivation of sugar beets were conducted; 15 pure bred bulls were brought into the area. Agricultural information was also disseminated through the newly organized Agricultural Society; seed growers, poultry and gardening clubs sprang up at various school districts under the guidance of their respective teachers. Some 18 community business meetings were held in Edenthal school during the winter months to discuss problems connected with the competition; lecturers on agriculture and gardening attended these meetings. Schools were improved, wells dug, trees planted, buildings painted, and playgrounds extended. It is safe to say that the activities initiated will continue long after this particular competition itself is forgotten. Due to the prolonged economic depression period the C.N.R. discontinued the project.

EDUCATION

Soon after the municipality was organized six school districts were formed. They were Gretna, Edenburg, Halbstadt, Altona, Acheson (now Rosenfeld) and Plum Coulee. All the other part of the municipality was served by private schools. Private schools at the outset deteriorated because of inadequate training facilities for teachers.

To remedy the situation Dr. Bryce, in 1891, for the Department of Education, went to Kansas, U.S.A., for the purpose of securing the services of a competent educator for this settlement. He contacted Rev. H. H. Ewert, who at that time was principal of a private high school at Halstead, Kansas. Mr. Ewert visited this community the same year, went through the settlement and found that here indeed was a field for higher education. In 1892 Mr. Ewert came with his family and made his home at Gretna. It may be mentioned here that a few years previous a start had been made to offer the youth in the community an opportunity to improve their education, but the results were negligible. Accordingly in 1892 the Mennonite Collegiate Institute was established in Gretna under the principalship of Mr. Ewert, with the object for more improved methods and better trained teachers.

The church as a whole, however, was not greatly enthused as yet in higher academic training and opposed the project, resulting in a division of two distinct church congregations, the Sommerfelder and the Bergthaler, the latter the more liberal minded in matters of education and more progressive along other lines. From 1893 to 1905 Mr. Ewert acted as school inspector and performed valuable service in raising the educational standard among the Manitoba Mennonites, when—through political intrigue—he was released from the inspectorship. By now there were 27 organized public schools in operation in the community, supplying the settlement with qualified teachers and professional men. By now it was also felt that the institute building either had to be enlarged or a new school built; the question as to change of location also cropped up and through a tragic misunderstanding among the supporters of the institute the Mennonite Educational Institute was organized and a school built at Altona in 1908, on the site of the present agricultural hall. The objects were identical and the Rev. J. J. Balzer, of Mt. Lake, Minnesota, for several years acted as principal in the institute at Altona. In January, 1926, this school burned down and was not rebuilt. Today the first of

these is still in operation with a student body that more than fills the school to capacity. Mr. Ewert died practically in harness at the end of December, 1934, and the community lost a pioneer educator. Amid great discouragements and with many sacrifices he spent a good part of his life in behalf of the educational interest of his people. As an educationist he was recognized and known far beyond the confines of this province, a man of wide travel and culture, prominent alike in church and civic affairs.

For many young men and women who graduated from the institute it proved to be a stepping stone to the university, obtaining the degree of doctor, lawyer, agriculturist, a royal nurse or graduating in home economics. Alfred Ewert, a son of the principal, earned the Rhode's Scholarship in 1912 for Manitoba, entering Oxford-Cambridge, England, in 1913. After a brilliant career as a student at said institute, he has since been retained as a professor of that venerable university.

In 1919 an edict was passed by the province eliminating the use of any language--French, German or Slavic--except English in public schools. Military organizations and the press brought pressure to bear on the provincial government to that effect. This radical change in the liberal educational policy followed up so far resulted in the formation of school districts and erecting school buildings, particularly among the Od Colonists, appointing official trustees where necessary, hiring teachers and levy school taxes. These drastic measures culminated in an exodus, particularly of some 4,000 Old Colonists, to Mexico, as to them the loss of the German language meant the loss of an integral part of their religious faith. A good many of the Sommerfelder and Bergthaler church members felt deep concern also, and left the province in the years 1923, 1924 and 1925. Many villages occupied by the Old Colonist Mennonites lost almost their entire population. Eighteen families out of 29 left Blumenort village; 20 out of 28 went from Reinland; Rosengart lost 28 out of 30 and other villages on a proportionate basis. Large tracts of land in the very centre of the reserve were left vacant by some of Canada's best farmers and most peaceable citizens. Soon these lands were taken up by those liberal Mennonites who did not migrate and partly by new immigrants from southern Russia with a progressive outlook, and who have contributed greatly to the educational progress of the Canadian Mennonite as a whole.

About the same time some two thousand from the Sommerfelder and Bergthaler congregations from both Manitoba and Saskatchewan migrated, some to Mexico, but the bulk of them to Paraguay, for similar reasons. This episode affected the tax structure in Rhineland in the levy of more school taxes as evidenced in the Statistical Levy Sheet herein as from 1920 on.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

World War II will eventually come to an end. When that time comes, local government, if it is to survive, must be prepared to solve the difficult problems with which it will be confronted in the post-war period.

Mr. R. M. Fisher, K.C., the Deputy Municipal Commissioner for the last 17 years, has always been a genial friend to municipal councils and

their staff. If there is any man in this province that knows the problems of municipal councils and who knows—almost by intuition - the truth or rule of action as to where the shoe pinches, it is Mr. Fisher. His timely advice or direction at municipal as well as at district conventions is always appreciated. His suggestions are welcomed, inasmuch as they convey the responsibility that public servants have to shoulder and carry out, such as: the conservation of the finances of municipalities and the building up of reserves which will permit the making of plans by the municipalities of necessary public works; devising plans to provide recreational and cultural opportunities for residents of the municipality, thereby checking the trek of young people to urban centres;

Administrative officers and personnel of councils change from time to time. Local government in Manitoba involves the annual turnover of some seventeen and one-half million dollars. That is big business, and those who, without previous experience, take on the responsibilities of the administration of local government, should have the opportunity to equip themselves by becoming familiar with the principles of public administration and finance.

Problems are various and many and can only be solved if the public can be interested, and those responsible for the administration of local government are prepared to devote their energies and abilities to discover practical solutions. Reform, if it is to be effective and practical, should come from within rather than be imposed from without.—Thus Mr. Fisher.

We join with him that we all may realize our respective responsibilities as citizens of a free domacrocy and do our part to ensure that freedom shall not perish through neglect. For democracy means freedom—but freedom with a responsibility. In the matter of public administration and finance, short courses were inaugurated at the University of Manitoba prior to the war. Those members of municipal councils and staff who were able to attend these courses certainly benefited therefrom. Unfortunately, for the duration of the war, these short courses have been suspended. For Saskachewan municipalities these refresher courses are still carried on, war or no war. The refreshing thing in connection with these courses is, that outside of the value received, and irrespective of whether you are bald-headed, wooly-haired, bob-haired or simply haired, the doctor's stethoscope is not placed on your solar plexus in order to find out if that little patch of gray matter at the back of your skull shows dim, medium or bright. Imagine a class of municipal officials attending such a short course in the post-war period, equal in number at least to those usually attending the annual municipal conventions. What a heart-thrill this would be to our friend R.M.

And further: our friend "Jimmy" Laird from the Provincial Audit Department, would have no occasion to shoot straight from the shoulder, as no more Chinese puzzles would be sent into his office in the form of monthly financial statements. For to Mr. Laird goes the credit together with his staff of auditors to have set up a readable form on which municipal clerks all over he province have now to make out the monthly financial statements of which one copy goes to the audit branch in the Legislative Building.

THE COMING OF ELECTRIC POWER

The coming of electric power was indeed a red letter day, an epoch-making occasion in this community on September 15, 1935. What the hydro has meant to the community cannot be estimated. Several local plants provided service before that and the village of Gretna was served for a number of years by an American utility. The opposite is true today, for the Manitoba Power Commission is exporting electricity across the international boundary from Gretna, Manitoba, to Neche, N.D., and further south. The saving effected by hydro over local plants is by no means a small affair. Many of the undertakings that have sprung up since 1935 would have been uneconomic and impossible to operate were it not for the hydro.

Your Council, Mr. Citizen, ever since 1921, has made repeated efforts to secure "electric" service, but due to prohibitive costs in years previous to 1935, they had to contend themselves with watchful waiting. It is generally agreed that hydro is an asset in any community. For the past twenty-five years "Your Hydro" has helped raise the standard of living in Manitoba, and in the future will continue to improve the living and working conditions of town and country. Mark you: town and—country. This of course means rural electrification; that in due course it will be available to the farm homes and workshops on the farm, to all and sundry, who would like to have this utility brought to their homes on the farm. The Hydro Commission can be assured that we rural rustics will acclaim this post-war undertaking as a dream that came true.

The other utility is the telephone. About the year 1900 the Bell Telephone Co. built its line into Altona. In 1908 this utility was purchased by the Manitoba Government and a great deal of improvement has been made in telephone service. In fact, plans are materializing now and headway is being made in providing Rosenfeld, Altona and Gretna with continuous day-an-night service, with Altona the centre.

HOSPITALIZATION

A need for a hospital in this community had often been felt and discussed. A few citizens vitally interested in the project sought ways and means to that end. The Municipal Council in 1936 donated a full block with one fair-sized building thereon at Altona for that purpose. There were also donations from various local organizations and individuals who gave freely to this undertaking. Alterations had to be made before the building was ready for occupation. When the Bethania Hospital opened its doors for service, the staff consisted of two registered nurses. Today there are six, three of them having their R.N. certificates; also two cooks, two laundresses and a caretaker. For some time now they have not been able to accept as many patients as they would like to have come in for treatment, due to lack of space. Plans are in the making for the construction of a new hospital conforming to standards set by the Provincial Department of Health.

CONCLUSION

What applies to Rhineland as well applies to any other rural municipality in our province, with more or less variations in the problems at hand. There are a number of rural municipalities surpassing Rhineland

in years of existence. They no doubt could present interesting data pertaining to their own municipality if one or the other of its citizens would be indiscreet enough to take it upon himself to delve into its history.

The thirty-one years as a public servant of Rhineland Municipality have been pleasant ones, having been blessed with a good measure of long hours and hard work at the Municipal Office. But there has been romance in the work. Take romance away and you are as dead as plant life beyond the timberline. The reveries of a municipl clerk are expressed in the ditty below and the conditions referred to therein, do not of course, apply to the Rhineland Council.

THE MUNICIPAL CLERK

(With apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

If you can be a general factotum,
And fill the office of a public drudge;
And answer fully every half-wit's question,
And statutes know as well as any judge.
If you can fill out all the registrations
And government forms that come each week;
Correct mistakes of other public servants,
And give your time for this without a cheep.
If you can frame up all the resolutions
For Councillors, who don't know what they want,
And don't know what to say, or how to say it,
(And you must write because you feel they can't);
And when the Mayor or Reeve comes in (important),
With extra work some thirteen times a week,
And you state all the facts and have the papers,
As if you knew his mind before he speaks;
And give up your work that brings in money
To do the work you're not required to do,
But do it with a sense of much injustice
To your own self and all your family too;
If you knew all the by-laws and their contents,
And asnwer every question on the phone,
Which you pay rent for monthly, though a nuisance
That takes your time nor pays your bills at home;
And when the councillors talk of cutting salaries,
Your brains and nerves may now be but a wreck,
If you can carry on and do your duty
On half-pay and retain your self-respect.
If you can do all this without complaining,
And bravely face the worry and the work,
Lose holidays and all that your heart longs for,
You'll make an ideal "Municipal Clerk."

(This poem appeared in the "Free Press and Economist," Shellburne, Ontario, and is confined to Ontario).

— THE END —

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